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THE BULLETIN OF

The Institute of Child Study

Vol. 19, No. 4 (75) December, 1957

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

$1.00 per year Single copies, 25 cents

THE BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHILD STUDY is published four times a year at 45 Walmer Road, Toronto, under the direction of an editorial committee of the Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single subscriptions, $1.00 per year.

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The writing, editing, and secretarial work on THE BULLETIN are part of the defined activities of staff members of The Institute of Child Study and as such are financed through the Federal Health Grant project 605–5–147.

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Positive Mental Health

W. E. BLATZ

IN A PREVIOUS ARTICLE* we made an arbitrary distinction between physical and mental health, and here too we will continue that arbitrary distinction.

First, if we look at the physical realm we shall see that in the early years of this century there was begun a movement towards developing the physical potentialities of human beings, largely through better diet and a fad for exercise. The result of this wide-spread enthusiasm was a taller and presumably stronger child, hence a bigger, brawnier adult. In this continent particularly, the young adults of today stand inches taller than the generation which went before.

We are not sure whether there was a definite trend towards *desiring* a taller person or whether, after the movement was in force, taller people *happened* to emerge. At any rate, tallness became a virtue. Whether it should be is, of course, open to question. If the developing of taller people were to proceed with accelerated vigour, rather serious complications could arise about the physical aspects of our living arrangements: the dimensions of doors, beds, upper berths, theatre seats, would have to be radically modified. However, the point is that the generation now growing up will be taller and stronger and will live much longer.

One interesting aspect of these circumstances is that even the smaller person is willing to accept the tallness of his colleagues and the increased stature of his offspring without undue concern, thinking that perhaps this trend in physical development might be a good thing after all.

But now let us turn to the mental realm. Here we find the goal not so clear cut, and in fact there is still a good deal of questioning about it. Corresponding to tallness might be the mental phenomenon of brightness or intelligence. But this comparison cannot hold, for surely no one would suggest that high intelligence is a necessary concomitant of good mental health. Other more or less intangible goals have been suggested. People have named happiness, honesty, good character, success in life, wealth,

**The Bulletin* (June, 1957).

and so on, but, after all, these goals are ephemeral and difficult to define. Moreover, even if they were attained, we doubt that they in themselves would contribute anything to good mental health. Most of us like to consider ourselves the embodiment of fine mental health. However, it is only among hospital patients that we find a person who believes that he is completely perfect.

In the scheme of security as outlined in these articles, the suggestion has been made that mental health is a function of accepting the consequences of one's decisions. Such a definition does not lay down any specific goal, but it does make it possible, with some ingenuity, to measure the degree to which a person learns to accept consequences. The important unit of that sentence is the word *learn*. A person cannot be born accepting consequences. One guesses that in the beginning of consciousness this knowledge is not present. This presents a challenge. How does that phenomenon, considered so important for the security theory, become integrated in the individual's consciousness? Obviously one can only guess. No one knows how the child experiences his earliest impressions. Neither can any of us recall our own early experiences of this sort.

Since anyone's guess is as good as another's, we shall suggest that this important aspect in our lives develops in the following fashion. The most significant aspect of consciousness is its continual change; the "moment of consciousness" is a psychological artifact. Nevertheless, of necessity we are prompted to think of each moment as a perceptual whole, endowed through experience with a meaning that later can be identified and represented by a symbol, a word, a gesture or phrase. These moments of consciousness follow each other in time, and again, whether through a necessary characteristic of consciousness or through learning, the individual will assign to this succession of conscious events a causal relationship. He may not think of them as cause and effect but at any rate he will learn to expect that certain moments of consciousness, or certain experiences, will inevitably be followed by certain others, in some sort of pattern.

For example, when a baby cries, almost inevitably he will be picked up. He may not be able to initiate the crying activity at will in this early stage, nor will he be able to name the consequence as that of being picked up. But at any rate, there is in this situation the possibility of recall, and also the possibility of projecting this recall into the future. Thus he will gradually acquire a theory or hypothesis that when certain things happen, other things will follow. For instance, the child will learn that if he goes out in the rain, he will get wet; if he steps off into space he will fall; if he drinks water he will be less thirsty; if he cries he will be suckled. Thus the *nature* of consequences, whatever its intrinsic nature, occupies a pragmatic place in human conscious development.

Now the next step should occur when the individual learns that he can to some extent control his immediate behaviour. If he sees an object he can reach for it, and the consequence of reaching is to grasp and have that object. However, if previous reaching has been painful, if he has touched a hot stove perhaps, he can learn to restrain the reaching action. In this fashion, he is learning to control, not the consequences of his behaviour, but his behaviour itself. By controlling his behaviour the consequences he wants will follow, and those he does not want will not follow.

But the individual has yet to learn that he cannot control the result that will follow any specific action. Thus, in order to avoid getting wet, he can refrain from going out if it is raining, but if he does go out, he cannot control the wetness. It takes a long time to learn this, and the learning programme is a gradual one.

Now at last, if the child is willing to accept the consequences of his behaviour, whether he can control them or not, then we consider that he is mentally healthy. Note, he can avoid the consequences of his behaviour by not initiating that particular behaviour pattern. For instance, he can learn that a toy or a coin belongs to someone else and he can refrain from taking it. In this way he avoids the consequences of having committed an act which is disapproved.

On the other hand, if he takes the toy or the coin and attempts to avoid being caught or apprehended, this then is an avoidance of consequences which is not good mental health. *An individual who never avoids the consequences of his behaviour, whether controlled or uncontrolled, is a perfectly mentally healthy person.* Obviously, though, there is no such being. This is an ideal, but the closer we approach the ideal state, the more mentally healthy we are, and the further we depart from it, the more we are mentally unhealthy.

COURSE FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS

A month's course for child care workers from the new Thistletown Hospital for emotionally disturbed children has been begun at the Institute of Child Study. This hospital is to be opened in the new year under the direction of Dr. John Rich. The workers, all men, will be working and indeed living with the children who will range in age from six to twelve years. At the Institute, the emphasis will be on "well" children and the building of sound adult-child relationships, this being considered essential to understanding and working with emotionally disturbed children.

The Child and His Adults

DOROTHY A. MILLICHAMP*

ONCE UPON A TIME adults used to be very comfortable with children. Fathers, mothers, teachers, and nannies knew intuitively that they were both guardians and authorities. They assumed ownership, loved and felt responsible, directed and corrected, instructed and insisted, praised and reproved with an ease and certainty that this was their duty. "Mother knew she knew best." Her job and status were established, and her self-importance and self-worth were assured. Adults stood together; they knew that they knew more than children and, certainly, what was best for them. No wonder the adults felt "uppity"!

Adults wonder about themselves. Perhaps this is merely a nostalgic tale. Whether it be true or false, there is certainly a difference between the adults of then and now. Today we are uncertain of our adult roles and are seeking knowledge with some humility. We have increased our sense of responsibility, but our self-confidence has been sadly deflated. Far *more* adults are concerned with children. Parents are not alone; they are surrounded and supported by teachers, social workers, public health workers, parent educators, mental hygienists, doctors and nurses, psychiatrists and psychologists, religious educators, and recreational and camp directors. We are a large group, all concerned with children. Together we are wondering. We are not "uppity."

Why have we changed from being certain to wondering? The world in which children grow and in which we live has itself changed, but, equally important, our thinking about ourselves and children has been stirred by ideas flowing from the human sciences and, particularly, from child study. Child study has turned the matter of child rearing upside down and, therefore, disturbed our status quo and our serenity. We used to be concerned with the role the child played in our adult lives; now we are pricked into examining our role in the child's world. What do we mean to children? What could or should we mean to children? What is happening at his end of our relationship? What kind of relationship is best between child and adult; best, not for the adult, but for the child?

Child study is upsetting! For years we believed that children accepted and understood our well meaning efforts to bring them up, and we

*Professor Millichamp is Assistant Director of the Institute. This article is based on an address given to the Second Annual Parent Education Conference held at the Institute in September, 1957.

thought we knew how to do it. Child study has made us less sure. From it we have learned that techniques wherein we trusted have often been damaging rather than helpful. We have learned, for instance, that the kindly criticism we have used with the best intentions may increase our own sense of adequacy but lessen the child's self-confidence; that our controls, which exhilarate us, may weaken his own development in self-control; that our possessiveness and pressures towards our own goals, which give us a sense of belonging, may increase the child's sense of isolation from us; that our fine experience of loving the child may make us so urgent that we force him to dislike, fear, or even hate his adults; that our devoted sense of responsibility for him—a virtue in which we believed so sincerely—may bind the child to childhood forever, prevent him from belonging to his contemporaries or from becoming an adult himself.

These things have frightened us. They are the more terrifying because, like ghosts, they cannot be seen directly. Professional tests reveal them or they turn up in later years so disguised that we rarely recognize them. Such facts attack the heart of our adult role: the belief we had that we must take responsible control of the lives of our children.

Hence, many adults tossed away their assumed right to order children's lives. With this went the last remnants of our own self-confidence. What, we ask, is left for us to do? Watch while the child chooses his own course of studies? Be a buddy to him and play bear under the rug? Let him order us and allow his demands to determine the household menus? Has the child, indeed, become the "uppity" one?

Adult confidence is renewed. As we have outgrown this uncomfortable stage, we have become wiser. We realize that what child study has to say about uneasy children is all too true; but we had forgotten that not all children are uneasy. Many felt comfortable about adults before the child study era and many continue to do so. We looked so carefully into what made things go wrong that we rarely asked what made things go right. Actually, adults who have reared "well" children have done very usual things in ordering the children's lives. They have used "good, old-fashioned methods," but with a difference. Our new job is to learn what this difference is and how a mentally healthy child feels and thinks about his adults.

From the knowledge that child study has gleaned more recently adults may accept this fact: adults are even more important in children's lives than we ever believed them to be. There is proof that a child's feelings towards his adults are basic to his development and a forerunner of his future human relationships. Because we are so important, we must accept the fact that we can do considerable harm. Our opportunity for good is

equally great. The good or evil we may effect does not depend upon the method or technique we employ but rather upon the relationship which we create between ourselves and the child. So assured, we adults may resume our older and more comfortable status of importance and worth—but newly defined.

Is fear a "right" relationship? It is quite usual, and relatively easy, to create a relationship that is grounded in *fear*. An enlightened adult no longer considers that devastating fear, as described by Charles Dickens, is desirable; but many of us support what we like to call "a healthy fear of. . . ." This fear comes in many forms in children: fear of our wrath, of our poor opinion; fear that we will withdraw our support, will laugh at their expense; or fear that we may not love them as well if they are not very good. The reason for our use of such fears is obvious. We know the child, like a bicycle, must have a brake. As a child, he has neither self-control nor good judgment, and we adults must restrain and direct his speed. A bit of fear is handy in attaining quick control. Busy fathers and teachers, and neighbours with gardens, find this especially useful. If fear works as a control, and it does, why not use it?

There are hazards. To fear is always to avoid, to keep at a safe distance, to keep oneself to oneself. Is this to be part of the child's relationship with us? To fear someone is always to feel the lesser of the two. From small beginnings, this can accumulate until one feels the lesser of all people. To fear is to feel uncertain of oneself, hesitating to put forth ideas, and to grow doubtful of one's own capabilities. Finally, to fear is to feel uncertain of oneself in one's relationships, to feel alone in a world of people.

These feelings of fear may make the child behave just as we used to think he should—with quietness and meekness, which are pleasant to us. Only by doing what is expected of him can this child feel safe. Now, when he is young, playing safe may protect him, but what happens later when he is on his own? If he is afraid, it will be hard for him to grow up to take an equal role among contemporaries. It will be difficult for him to establish intimate and confident relationships. We may imagine that these childish feelings will be outgrown. It is a false imagining. They are so deeply rooted that they usually remain, restraining the child from later participation and often giving rise to stubbornness and resistance. Indeed, the most belligerent adult has often been the most fearful child. The fighter is not always tough. Actually, he may be desperately frightened.

Reasoning thus we may become convinced that fear should be left out of a child's relationship with his adults. But if we do not use fear, what will control our children? Recently, ways of child rearing that used no fear have been attempted, but unfortunately they achieved no control;

and to be completely uncontrolled is, in itself, a fearful thing. Is there any way by which we can become important enough to children that they will welcome our full role?

Another kind of relationship. The nursery school is a new venture in bringing up children, and here we find a special kind of child-adult relationship worth examining. The children are very dependent upon their teachers. They take and seek help, follow direction, come for comfort, enjoy attention. They expect control as part of their tie to the adult. In fact, the children remind the teacher of her duty—"You must not let me have four desserts." But these children who are so dependent are the ones who are also extremely "independent."* They go their own way right under the adult's eye. They are the ones who say: "I can do that myself"; "No it isn't a man, it is a horse"; "I need green paint"; "I would like to sing 'Jingle Bells' "; "See how high we can swing." Traditionally, we have not thought of independence as an aspect of a relationship, but we were wrong. The independent effort of these children grows out of their belief in adult support. Because they know they have adults backing them, they dare to "independ" and feel self-confident. Out of support comes freedom to be oneself. Such children have no fear of losing the adult's support by acting on their own. They are equally without fear of losing their "selfness" by accepting adult control. These children are not new or uncommon but they have been unnoticed.

How shall we describe children of this kind? They are willing to depend and to "independ." They are certain of themselves in both these roles and they are also certain of us. We might name such a state *trust*. So described, the core of the child's relationship with his adults becomes one of inner certainty—of trust. Can we visualize the future of such a relationship? As the child grew, we should expect him to increase in self-confidence and also in a sense of being one of us. As this occurred, we should expect him to grow beyond our controls and his close ties to us and to find contemporary relationships of a mutual kind. Such a child, we imagine, would gradually develop an idea of a world which is supportive and an idea of himself as a person who belongs in this world and who therefore may be himself within it. In trust there is, of course, no fear, for these two are mutually exclusive. The child is related to us, knowing we are for him, not against him. Knowing that we support him, he can venture forth and attempt all manner of things.

Relationships in the family. The child's primary relationship is with his mother. This has been said so often and so loudly within recent years

*B. M. Butler and J. G. Partridge, "Pre-school Security," unpublished study.

that one might imagine it was a newly discovered fact. Because mothers have been extolled and scolded so very much, we are going to say little about them. Perhaps mothers need, more than anything, to be reminded that they are not alone; that there are other adults who, along with them, help children to develop a sense of adult trustworthiness. In fact, a mother cannot do this by herself. She can be *dependable* and so prove her trustworthiness, but until this is expanded beyond her the child's bounds of trustfulness are very limited.

Our scattered family living has isolated children from their kin group. Grandmothers, aunts, and uncles no longer live in or around the child's own dwelling. However, they are still a part of the child's world. There are visits to grandparents' house. There is the visit from grandma and grandpa. We thought, for a time, that grandparents should follow procedures that parents had established, but should they? We do not want the child to learn that grandma is merely a duplicate of mother. She is different; she acts differently. Trust her for what she is herself. Possibly she has the privileged role of "dependable spoiling." She can afford to provide the treats, the comforts, the play, the stories and can be counted on so to do.

Aunts and uncles pinch-hit for parents. The child comes to depend on them, though not for the constant care and ordering he finds in his parent. Perhaps their support of his interests and independent ways, their gifts, letters, telephone calls, trips, make him know that these people are there and that they are *for* him.

The child and his other adults. In the old days, there used to be nannies, cooks, and maids. There may still be some! These people may be real assets in expanding the child's sense of trust to other adults. Even though the old-fashioned nannie has disappeared, perhaps we can make better use of sitters and adult friends. These are in no way substitutes for parents but rather extensions of the child's adult world.

Outside the home and kin group, the first adults that the child meets are his teachers. We have always known teachers were important because they instruct. How could we have missed the vital importance of the relationship they develop with children? It is they who can prove to the child the dependability of the whole world of adult authority. His parents love him but his teachers are interested in him. They are interested in him because he is himself, not because he is theirs. If he develops trust in their support, he begins to feel comfortable in a world of authority, and to feel that authority, which later becomes law and order, is set up *for* him and not *against* him.

The child meets his nursery school teachers first. Some people doubt

that the young child should be taken from his home. Our belief is that young children need gradually extended relationships which enlarge their sense of certainty in people and also in themselves, because now both teachers and parents believe in them. At first, the new child may look to his nursery school teacher for what he gets at home. No teacher can play a dependable parent role. She can play only her own role. She can be trustworthy where she is sure she can be dependable. She cannot give parental affection or full emotional contact dependably. She cannot meet childish needs with personal care as the mother can. She can, however, increase the child's sense of self-importance, achievement, and self-esteem. She can expect more self-effort from him than can the mother, and the child will thrive on the faith she has in him. It would be interesting for nursery school teachers to review their procedures with a view to appraising the relationships that are being established through each.

Some people feel that day nurseries should not exist because they break mother-child relationships. On the other hand, if the job of being a dependable, loving mother is done carefully, it does not appear to take full time. Furthermore, for these children, the day nursery may be the only source of dependable "other adults." This is perhaps particularly true of new Canadians. In the day nursery they learn that the Canadian adults they meet are people to be trusted. Through these early experiences, they may develop a "right" relationship with their new world.

The kindergarten teacher of today meets new difficulties. The children who have come from nursery schools are not afraid of her. Indeed, they are pretty certain little creatures. They like adults and they like themselves. They are, in fact, "uppity." They need controls and are ready to trust them. Kindergarten teachers then, if they are to prove their trustworthiness, have to make their controls clear and sensible. Perhaps their best role is to be "dependably tough."

Teachers in the grades do not have an easy time. The child in the early grades is venturing into new areas—numbers, words, ideas—which are bewildering and even frightening. The child needs to feel adult support as quickly as possible and all along the way if he is to retain his self-confidence in the world of the mind. Yet the teacher must by the very nature of her job correct, criticize, and instruct. All of this may imply to the child: "You don't know; you are wrong; I know more." The situation is forever pointing out to the child his inadequacies. How can the teacher prove she is supporting him as he faces his inadequacies? She might first examine herself and her methods: for the number of corrections she makes, how many "encouragements" does she give? for the number of instructions enunciated, how many times is the child allowed his own thoughts? Perhaps, each first week of the school year,

children's work should be so simple that they cannot help but get it right. Then the teacher has the opportunity to let the children know she is supportive. Once they really believe this, they can realize that correction is itself a form of support. They can interpret her correction, not as proof of their inadequacies, but as belief in their possibilities.

There are many other adults who belong to the child: the neighbours, the corner policeman, the shop keeper, the doctor, and the counsellors at camp. In addition to these, there is a group of highly trained professional workers who play a large part in the lives of some children. These are social workers. For the most part, social workers enter the lives of children who have had little proof of adult trustworthiness, who have had, indeed, a great deal of evidence that leads to distrust. These children are distrustful not merely because they have lacked dependable parents but also because no dependable adults have belonged in their lives. We cannot replace the excellence of dependable parents but guided by social workers we could do more than we have done to use other adults who would offer children experience not of parental dependability but of adult dependability. Foster mothers in their own homes are doing this. Perhaps in institutions we need to have "foster-mothers-by-the-day" or volunteers whose job it would be to enhance the child's certainty. From our own studies, we know that it is possible to help some babies, who have been deprived of their own parents, to grow certain of adults' trustworthiness.* How this can be done when the child is older, and has learned to distrust adults, is harder to say. Such children hardly dare to accept the adult support which they need so desperately. Because of this, they withdraw from us and often rebel. Here again, the social worker cannot play her role alone. Many understanding and dependable adults are needed, including some who are especially prepared. We have much to learn about re-establishing human relationships.

Children's religious teachers also form a special group of other adults. From such adults, boys and girls can get help in crystallizing the meaning of their relationships among people and support while they struggle to grasp thoughts which stretch beyond these.

Trust of mother and trust of father. Amid these "other adults," the parents may feel that they are alone no longer. Nevertheless, parents remain the core from which children's relationships grow, and they are the constant figures throughout their child's growing-up. With so much discussion of a mother's role, fathers must sometimes feel forgotten. The vital importance of father in the child's life seems evident to us. It also seems evident that the earlier his role begins, the better it will be for the

*Betty Flint, "The Security of Infants," in manuscript.

child. For father this of course means bathing, diapers, and cuddling. In these many small ways it seems that our dependability is established for the baby. With father and mother closely related to him, the baby has a world in which at least two adults can be trusted and in which his sense of certainty may gather strength. These two adults are not the same; they are different. And so, from the beginning, the child finds that trustworthiness is not a matter of physical techniques, but rather a matter of people.

Mother and father cannot be consistent, if that means being identical. Nor can they be consistent within themselves if that means always doing exactly the same thing in the same way. They can, however, be what we have called "dependable"—dependable in the eyes of the child. We can be dependable and still be as different as we are. There is certainly no one special type of mother personality or father personality necessary to dependability. Nor is any one set of techniques required. What seems to matter most is that fathers and mothers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers, and all his other adults, in their unique ways, prove to the child that constantly he is cared for in his inadequacies and supported in his ventures. The state of mind and feeling which emerges within the child we have called trust.

EVENING STUDY GROUPS FOR PARENTS

The Parent Education Division of the Institute of Child Study offers two evening discussion group series to start in January, 1958. Meetings are held weekly for ten weeks at 8 P.M. at the Institute, 45 Walmer Road, Toronto. There will be two groups studying LIVING IN THE FAMILY—one starting Monday, January 13th, the other starting Tuesday, January 14th. A group studying DISCIPLINE will be held Mondays, beginning January 13th. For further information call WAlnut 3-6611, local 542.

Child Development in Psychology Conferences

KARL S. BERNHARDT

DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS I have attended a number of psychology conferences. These included the Canadian Psychological Association in Toronto, the International Congress of Psychology in Brussels, the World Federation of Mental Health in Copenhagen, and the American Psychological Association in New York. It would be impossible to report in detail on the hundreds of papers, addresses, symposia, and meetings that made up these conferences, but it may be of value to report some of my impressions and memories.

Perhaps the most vivid impression from all these conferences is that psychology today is a vigorous, respectable discipline which has attracted the energies and intelligent efforts of a very large number of people throughout the world. Today, in contrast to the situation a few years ago, there seems to be no need to defend or excuse psychological work. Research is going ahead on many psychological frontiers, and insights are accumulating. There is a clear awareness of the need for more and more reliable knowledge of human nature and conduct, and serious efforts are being expended to meet that need. Psychologists are not as sharply divided into schools as formerly, and there is a convergence on common problem areas. The boundaries between psychology and other disciplines are not so clearly drawn. At Brussels, one of the principal lectures was given by an anthropologist, and in some of the symposia there physiological and psychiatric material was presented along with contributions from psychological research. Co-operation among different professions and disciplines was even more evident at Copenhagen where roughly a score of different disciplines were represented.

Perhaps the most important impression I have from these different conferences is that, although we are fully aware of the extent of our ignorance about many aspects of human nature and conduct, our actual knowledge is extensive. This was evidenced not through any loud boasting or proclaiming but rather in the air of quiet, modest confidence in research as the method of advancing our knowledge, and in the careful scrutiny of what had already been reported. Gaps in knowledge were recognized, though rather as a challenge than with any attitude of defeatism.

Another comforting impression was the disregard of geographical and national barriers. The only barrier left in the world of science seems to be language, and even this the efficient interpreting facilities make less formidable. In Brussels and Copenhagen I chatted with people from nearly all the European countries, including some from behind the so-called iron curtain. I found these people to have interests and concerns similar to my own. I listened to scientists from all the continents of the world and, when I had recovered from my initial interest in the novelty of it all, I found that national boundaries and oceans had been forgotten and we were concentrating on universal problems and methods of study used by scientists the world over. The important thing was our common concern with the quest for an understanding of people. One realizes that the thousands of people who are participating in increasing numbers every year in international scientific conferences are doing much more than merely exchanging scientific insights; they are building a fund of international understanding that may go a long way towards producing not only coexistence but also co-operation among the peoples of the world.

Child development, one of my main interests, had an important place at all these conferences. At the Canadian Psychological Association meetings two of the twelve sessions, as well as the paper Dr. Mary Northway contributed in the session honouring Professor Bott, were devoted to this area. At the International Congress in Brussels, child development was equally prominent. One of the three distinguished evening lecturers was Professor Jean Piaget of Switzerland; it was interesting to trace the influence of his work in a dozen or more papers from different parts of the world. Two of the twenty-four symposia, and about fifty of the approximately two hundred and fifty individual papers, dealt with developmental material. Some of the more prominent areas of research represented here were: the effect of early experiences; mother-child separation; personality, social, cognitive, and sensory-motor development. There was a symposium on the use of the longitudinal method and a number of papers on longitudinal material. This symposium included reports of studies from Germany, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States and dealt with such aspects as the relationship between physical development and the development of abilities, parental attitudes and practices and their effect on the child's development, cognitive development, and the development of children's methods of coping with problems.

"Growing Up in a Changing World" was the theme of the meetings of the World Federation of Mental Health at Copenhagen. This theme was developed in relation to different cultures, to normal and problem families, to the school, to delinquency, to the problem of displaced

persons, and to the international scene. Although very little new material was brought out, there was the necessary and timely clarification of issues and emphasis on goals for both research and the applied fields.

For me, the most valuable part of the Copenhagen meetings was the discussion groups which met daily during the week. I had the honour of chairing a group discussing the mental health of the child in the family. Here were about twenty people from different parts of the world and from different professions who exchanged experiences and ideas about child rearing and family life. I was surprised to realize—and perhaps I shouldn't have been—that the child rearing methods, goals, and attitudes in different parts of the world were very similar. There were differences, of course, but these were mainly superficial in nature. Descriptions of child rearing problems in Denmark, given by one member of the group, sounded remarkably like those in Canadian families. The problems of parent education efforts in France, as outlined by another member of the group, reminded me of discussions in our own Parent Education Conference at the Institute of Child Study. Although we came to few concrete conclusions, as is often the case in such conferences, we did learn a great deal from each other. The group passed a resolution expressing the hope that cross-cultural studies of child rearing practices would be stimulated by the World Federation.

The American Psychological Association meeting in New York was by far the largest of these conferences, with an attendance of over five thousand and about one thousand people taking part in the programme. Again, the child development part of the programme was not inconsiderable—seven symposia and about thirty-five individual papers. The symposia dealt with such widely varied topics as doll play methodology in research, parent-child relationships, dependency in personality development, problems in longitudinal research, developmental influences on character formation, and language and the formation of concepts. The individual papers reported research in the areas of infant experience, motivation, socialization, and many others. The New York symposium on longitudinal studies paralleled that in Brussels in recognizing not only the limitations and difficulties but also the values of the method.

I find it difficult to pick out any individual address, discussion, or paper as being a particular highlight of these conferences; but if I were to do so, I think I would select some of the remarks of Dr. Margaret Mead, retiring president of the World Federation of Mental Health. Dr. Mead struck a challenging note which reverberated throughout the week of meetings in Copenhagen. She pointed out that we had now accumulated a great deal of information about the way the human organism matures, the kinds of individual differences to be found in infants, children, and

adolescents, and the characteristics of different periods of growth. She went on to say that, against this background of knowledge, we should be able to begin to ask more pertinent questions about such problems as juvenile delinquency, the gifted child, and the child who is less well endowed mentally. Dr. Mead emphasized that the million juvenile delinquents expected in 1960 in the United States were just as much a sacrifice of children as is the putting to death of all identical twins in a savage tribe. She made the strong plea that it should no longer be necessary for any society to sacrifice any of its children with the resources of knowledge, training, and wealth at our disposal.

Through my memories and impressions of these conferences comes the echo of Dr. Mead's challenge: we know a great deal about child development, but we need to put our knowledge to still more effective use.

REPORT OF THE 1957 PARENT EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Proceedings of the second annual Parent Education Conference held at the Institute of Child Study in September, 1957, are to be published in this December's issue of *Canadian Home and School*. Single copies of this issue (25 cents) may be ordered from *Canadian Home and School*, 370 Dundas St. W., Toronto 2B, Ontario.

Social Development Studies at the Institute of Child Study

HELEN BOTT*

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS Dr. Northway and her associates have used sociometric tests to study relations among children at the Institute of Child Study. The results of this work to date are presented in what they describe as a "do-it-yourself" manual† for those who wish to study the social development of individual children within a group, and also the social structuring of the group itself. Procedures are described in simple, non-technical terms that mask the skill with which essentials have been selected and arranged. An illuminating introduction is contributed by Miss Millichamp, Assistant Director of the Institute.

The sociometric test consists in asking children whom, within their group, they would like to be with. They are asked to name a first, second, and third choice for three situations: free play on the playground; in the playroom or classroom (for the grades); and in the music or games period. Thus nine choices may be recorded. Results are tabulated and may be presented pictorially. The tests are repeated at half-year intervals.

While these methods are here presented as practical aids for the teacher or group worker in understanding individual children and integrating groups, they have of course important research uses. Parents will perhaps be most interested in the interpretation of the facts discovered; these are admirably summarized in the concluding chapters. Results show that preferences are universal, but patterns differ, not only between different children but at times in the same child. No one is preferred by everyone, but nearly everyone is preferred by somebody. There are widely distributed choices and also close reciprocal friendships. Tightly knit small groups often form within a larger group. Diversity of behaviour is perhaps the most striking feature of the sociometric picture.

The sociometric method is applicable to the study of adolescent and adult groups as well as to that of young children. Light may be thrown on the mental health of individuals, on the dynamics of groups, their stresses and satisfactions, and on leadership in communities. The authors are to be congratulated on their explorations in the field of social behaviour—studies as complex and difficult as these are indeed important.

*Mrs. Bott pioneered in the field of social studies with her *Method in Social Studies of Young Children* (University of Toronto Press, 1933).

†*Sociometric Testing: a Guide for Teachers*, by MARY L. NORTHWAY and LINDSAY WELD, University of Toronto Press, 1957, pp. 72, $1.95.

BOOK REVIEWS

Blindness in Children, by MIRIAM NORRIS, PATRICIA J. SPAULDING, FERN H. BRODIE. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 154, $3.00.

An unusual report in the literature on blind children, this book presents the findings from a five year study of almost three hundred blind pre-school children in the Chicago area. The report itself and the six developmental case histories present a wealth of valuable information for those concerned with pre-school children, whether blind or sighted, and should prove absorbing and enlightening to all who are interested in child development.

The report indicates that the project group had no pre-conceived theory and that conclusions were drawn from the studies themselves. The project made use of standardized measures of mental development and social maturity. Its results dispel some false but generally accepted beliefs about visually handicapped children; for example, that they have a developmental pattern which differs widely from that of other children. Perhaps the most important conclusion is that lack of opportunities for learning is the cause of retardation where no neurological difficulties are discernible. This also applies to premature children blinded in incubators.

Of interest to nursery school workers will be the fact that over seventy-five per cent of the blind children of nursery age were functioning well in sighted nursery schools. The project directors recommended these schools as treatment for blind children, whose progress was causing concern, and reported successful results.

The project staff maintained an objective attitude throughout, though its members were always conscious of parental feelings and, in fact, point up the extreme importance of family relationships. They recognize the advantage of a home atmosphere in helping the child's optimum development and realized the importance of supplementing test findings with careful home observations. It was understood that blind children make unusual demands on their parents.

Professional workers with the blind will find throughout the book helpful suggestions to pass on to parents. Too, they will find the work refreshingly different in that it lays no stress on the "blindisms" and mannerisms regularly associated with the handicap and usually over-emphasized in books on the subject. Teachers and workers in nursery schools will be interested in the nursery experience and the splendid results obtained.

This is a study that was needed badly. It refutes old prejudices and opens the door to new research toward the advancement of blind children wherever they may be.

Doris Weaver,
Pre-School Department,
The Canadian National Institute
for the Blind

Davy and His Dog, by LOIS LENSKI. Oxford University Press, New York, 1957. Pp. 39, $1.75.

Lois Lenski's books are always popular with our nursery school children. This latest one, which tells of Davy's adventures with his dog, Spot, is a clear, short, simple story. It, too, should prove to be a favourite with the 2's and 3's. Parents and nursery schools will all want to add this book to their children's library.

Dorothy McKenzie,
St. George's Nursery School

The Friendly Bear, written and illustrated by ROBERT BRIGHT. Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, (Doubleday Publishers, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 27, $2.25.

THE FRIENDLY BEAR is a book which will delight the pre-schooler because of its simple language, familiar theme and large, clear illustrations. The story, which is uncomplicated and yet interesting, is about a little boy called Matt who loves stories, the friendly bear who co-operates as much as he can, and Grampa, "who looks very much like the bear" but is more helpful to Matt because he can read.

Karen Fisher,
St. George's Nursery School

The Outside Cat, by JANE THAYER; illustrated by FEODOR ROJANKOVSKY. William Morrow & Company, New York, (George J. McLeod, Limited, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 30, $3.50.

Anyone can be an "outside" cat but you have to be pretty smart to be an "inside" cat, according to Samuel who, after many spirited manoeuvres, manages to rise from a nobody of the alley to a pet in somebody's home. The story, acceptable to 4 - 6 year-olds, left the writer in doubt as to whether it was merely intended to be about a social-climbing kitten, or more.

Who Ever Heard of Kangaroo Eggs?, by SAM VAUGHAN; illustrated by LEONARD WEISGARD. Doubleday Publishers, Toronto, 1957. Pp. 52, $3.00.

If you ever win a contest for naming a kangaroo and the first prize turns out to be the kangaroo, you would be wise to take note of Mehilda's experience. Wisely and humourously written and warmly illustrated, this book is probably most appealing to kindergarteners. Both author and illustrator seem to know a great deal about kangaroos and little children.

Lila Goldenberg,
St. George's Elementary School

Shadows, written and illustrated by LARRY KETTELKAMP. William Morrow & Company, New York, (George J. McLeod, Limited, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 64, $3.00.

Shadow tricks are made easy to perform by Mr. Kettelkamp's simple text and clear diagrams. Children will be eager to try these shadow devices and will, no doubt, be encouraged by this book to make up many others of their own. The second part of the book -- how we use shadows today in aerial photography, movies, medicine -- will be of special interest to boys. The text accompanying these topics is mainly for the older reader, but again, the diagrams and illustrations are clear in detail.

Some nine-year-old children have written about SHADOWS in this way: "I liked the part about the moon's shadow on the sun....it was a little hard to understand. I also liked the part about how you can make things with your hands." "I thought the illustrations were good because they were easy to understand." "I liked the part called useful shadows. I thought the 2 part was hart but I menaged it."

Barbara Willis,
St. Geroge's Elementary School

Ginnie and the Mystery House, by CATHERINE WOOLLEY: illustrated by URSULA KOERING. William Morrow & Company, New York, (George J. McLeod, Limited, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 191, $3.25.

I like this story because it sends the shivers up and down your back. If you like mystery stories, this is a good book to read. I liked it because of the way they start off calmly and then work you up and give you a scare. I also like the way they end up happily.

Bronwen Gates (11 years)

Play with Seeds, by MILLICENT E. SELSAM; illustrated by HELEN LUDWIG. William Morrow & Company, New York, (George J. McLeod, Limited, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 96, $3.00.

Most children like to open milk weed pods and watch the winged seeds float away on the breeze. PLAY WITH SEEDS is a nature book of the first order, with its many interesting seed experiments. Writing in a style which should be interesting for children of school age, Mrs. Selsam describes briefly the plants of the pre-historic ages and tells how our present plants have developed. The chapter on seed travels is particularly good. The numerous illustrations by Helen Ludwig add to the value of the book, for they are both clear and accurate. Recommended very highly for elementary school libraries and homes.

Flora M. Morrison,
St. George's Elementary School

Luna, The Story of a Moth, written and illustrated by ROBERT M. McCLUNG. William Morrow & Company, New York, (George J. McLeod, Limited, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 48, $3.00.

The short and "chancey" life of a Luna moth simply told in clear pictures and large print by an experienced zoologist writing for third and fourth grade children.

The Animal Kingdom, by RENÉ GUILLOT, translated by GWEN MARSH; illustrated by JOAN KIDDELL-MONROE. Oxford University Press, London, 1957. Pp. 195. $2.00.

African folk-lore, vivid in imagery, "nightmarish" in spots, told by René Guillot who knows how; "blood and guts" for the hardy, older school age child.

My First Book to Read, for Five to Seven-Year-Olds,
My Second Book to Read, for Six to Eight-Year-Olds, both by MARGARET B. PARKE; illustrated by CYNTHIA and ALVIN KOEHLER. Grosset & Dunlap, New York, (George J. McLeod, Limited, Toronto), 1957. Pp. 69, $1.98.

These are the first books in a series "written to promote the teaching of reading and writing on an individual basis". MY FIRST BOOK TO READ follows an interesting plan, with its suggestions for parents and teachers. It is divided into three sections: one of poems by Eleanor Farjeon, Edward Lear, Robert Louis Stevenson and many others, grouped around the letters of the alphabet; a second, which deals more specifically with reading readiness; and a third, giving suggestions for the guidance of the child's own creative writing.

MY SECOND BOOK TO READ is for the slightly older, slightly more advanced, reader. It deals with word meaning, new words, and spelling as well as original writing.

These two books would be well worth adding to bookshelves both at home and at school.

Rachael S. Minkler,
Principal,
St. George's Elementary School

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